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SUBJECT: NATO-RUSSIA: ALLIES WANT RUSSIA TO SHOW ITS CARDS

REF: USNATO 557

Classified By: Ambassador Ivo Daalder for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Secretary General appealed to Russia during a December 1 NATO-Russia Council (NRC) to approve a plan for NRC reform, and reminded Russia that failure to do so put at risk the entire package of deliverables for the upcoming NRC Ministerial. The Russian Ambassador to NATO said that he thought the NRC was close to approving the document, but, citing Russian concerns with specific elements of NRC reform, thought this would have to wait until after the December 4 Ministerial. At a subsequent NAC lunch, Allies agreed to call Russia's bluff by amending the draft reform plan to reflect Russian concerns. If Russia still says it cannot agree to the document, Allies will offer a solution that puts a February deadline on completing NRC reform before beginning work on Russia's preferred initiative, a proposed Joint Review of Common Security Challenges. End summary.

SecGen Asks and Russia Declines

¶2. (C) NATO Secretary General Rasmussen opened the December 1 informal NRC Ambassadorial meeting by noting recent progress toward finalizing the reform document "Taking the NRC Forward," and appealed to the NRC, particularly Russia, to approve the document in time for the December 4 NRC Ministerial (reftel). Russian Ambassador Rogozin responded that he believed the document could be agreed shortly, but not before the Ministerial. He highlighted three specific elements of NRC restructuring that had made it difficult to gain approval of the document by the GOR interagency. The SecGen noted the Russian concerns, but concluded that they were minor issues and appealed to Rogozin to approve the document in order to help move the NRC beyond "bureaucratic hurdles" so it could focus on substantive political issues.

All or Nothing

¶3. (C) The SecGen reiterated that the NRC had a package of three deliverables for the Ministerial ("Taking the NRC Forward, the NRC 2010 Work Plan, and a tasking to commence a Joint Review of Common Security Challenges) and if one could not be agreed it looked as if there would be nothing for the meeting. Canadian Ambassador McRae supported the SecGen, and said that this package of deliverables provided an indication of how NRC members intended to work on concrete areas of cooperation. He reminded Rogozin of the history of "Taking

the NRC Forward," including the numerous times Russia had blocked it, and asked if Moscow had the political will to agree the document at "any time in the future." (Note: At a press conference held soon after the meeting, Rogozin accused Canada and other countries of trying to "kill" all deliverables, and appealed to the SecGen to keep the meeting from being "objectless." He said nothing about Russia's role in this saga. End note.)

Allies Seek a Way Forward

¶4. (C) At a subsequent December 1 North Atlantic Council (NAC) lunch, Allies agreed to respond to the Russian concerns regarding NRC restructuring in order to achieve consensus. The SecGen proposed inserting into "Taking the NRC Forward" the three amendments asked by Russia. If Russia still could not agree, Allies were prepared to offer a solution that would make starting the Joint Review contingent upon completing "Taking the NRC Forward," possibly by the end of February. This approach would give Russia the extra time it said was needed to approve the document, while also requiring Russia to actually follow through on its commitment before the NRC embarked on another initiative.

DAALDER